

June 4, 1834.

I was at Lady Dudley Stuart's on Sunday — a pleasant circle — and made the acquaintance of Lord Hertford.<sup>1</sup> I dine with Lady Cork to-day, to meet the Mulgraves, Tavistocks, and Lincolns.

June 16.

I made Beckford's acquaintance at the Opera on Thursday. Conversation of three hours [he adds in the Mutilated Diary] ; very bitter and *malin*, but full of warm feelings for the worthy.

I dined yesterday with Lady Blessington, and Durham among the guests, and he talked to me nearly the whole evening; afterwards to Lady Salisbury's.<sup>2</sup>

A gossiping American journalist was one of the guests at this last dinner and wrote an account of it in his paper a few years later when Durham had crossed the Atlantic for his memorable work in Canada.

The guests dropped in, announced but unseen, in the dim twilight, and when Lord Durham came, I could only see that he was of middle stature, and of a naturally cold address. Bulwer spoke to him, but he was introduced to no one — a departure from the custom of that *maison sans g&ne*, which was either a tribute to his Lordship's reserve or a ruse on the part of Lady Blessington to secure to Disraeli the advantage of having his acquaintance sought : successful, if so, for Lord Durham after dinner requested a formal introduction to him. But for D'Orsay, who sparkles, as he does everything else, out of rule, and in splendid defiance of others' dullness, the soup and first half hour of dinner would have passed off with the usual English fashion of earnest silence, . . . Bulwer and Disraeli were silent altogether. I should have foreboded a dull dinner if in the open brow, and clear sunny eye, and unembarrassed repose of the beautiful and expressive mouth of Lady Blessington I had not read the promise of a change.

It came presently. With a tact of which the subtle ease and grace can in no way be conveyed into description, she gathered up the cobweb threads of conversation going on at different parts of the table, and, by the most apparent accident, flung them into Disraeli's fingers. It was an appeal to his opinion on a subject he well understood, and he burst at once, without preface, into that fiery vein of

<sup>1</sup> Lord Monmouth ' of *Coningsby* and the 'Lord Steyne' of *Vanity Fair*. <sup>2</sup> *Letters*, p. 86.

